

ART. II.—POPULAR BUDDHISM ACCORDING TO THE  
CHINESE CANON.

1. *The Buddhist Tripitaka as it is known in China and Japan.*  
A Catalogue and Compendious Report. By SAMUEL BEAL.  
Printed for the India Office. 1876.
2. *A Letter to Dr. R. Rost, Librarian, India Office, London.*  
By SAMUEL BEAL. Printed for the India Office. 1874.
3. *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese.* By S.  
BEAL. Trübner. 1871.
4. *The Romantic History of Buddha from the Chinese-Sanskrit.*  
By S. BEAL. Trübner. 1875.

IN the year 1875 there was delivered, at the Library of the India Office in London, a collection of books in seven large boxes, carefully packed in lead, with padding of dry rushes and grass. The books are the Buddhist Tripitaka in Chinese characters, with Japanese notations, issued in Japan, with an Imperial Preface, in the years 1681–1683 A.D. The entire series of 2000 volumes is contained in 103 cases or covers. When placed in the library, they required eleven shelves of ten feet in length. This was the magnificent gift of the Japanese Government to England, made on the suggestion of the ambassador who had recently visited Europe. He had doubtless been struck by the anomaly between the intense desire of the English to convert the heathen, and their profound ignorance of all religions except their own, and especially of the one which most closely resembles it, the state religion of his own country, Buddhism. Mr. Beal and Dr. Rost requested him to solicit the gift. No more appropriate gift could have been sent; and the Secretary of State directed the Rev. Samuel Beal, Professor of Chinese in the University of London, to prepare a “compendious report of the Buddhist Tripitaka.” The result of his labours is the catalogue *raisonné* now before us. Professor Beal is well known as one of the first Buddhist scholars in Europe, and he had already reported upon the Chinese books in the Library of the India Office.

The importance of the Chinese copy of the Buddhist canonical scriptures lies in the fact that it was commenced in the first century A.D. The translation was made from the Sanskrit, or from some Indian vernacular, by early Buddhist missionaries from India to China.

Like Socrates and other great religious teachers, Buddha taught only by word of mouth. Immediately after his death

his disciples assembled in conclave to recall and commit to memory the words of the master. These "words" were, like the Vedas, handed down from disciple to disciple, until they were finally committed to writing.\* They were divided into three parts, or *baskets*, Tri-pitaka: (1.) Doctrinal and practical discourses; (2.) Ecclesiastical discipline for the religious orders; (3.) Metaphysics and philosophy. So long as the words of Buddha were handed down by oral tradition, there was danger of heresies and false teaching; therefore, about the year 246 B.C., King Aśoka, who stood to Buddhism in a relation similar to that of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity, summoned a council to fix the canon. This council was to India what the Council of Nice became to Europe. The assembled fathers, who numbered a thousand, received the excellent advice from the king, that they should seek only for the words of the Master himself, for "that which is spoken by the blessed Buddha, and that alone, is well spoken." The canon drawn up by this council is the one accepted by the Southern Buddhists of Ceylon, Siam, and Burmah. None of the Pitakas can be traced back with certainty to an earlier date, although they contain matter which is much older. The Northern canon, which is somewhat larger than the Southern, was fixed at a council held in Kashmeer about the commencement of the Christian era. The Chinese is translated from this Northern canon; and many of the monasteries in China contain complete copies of the scriptures in the vernacular, and also of the Sanskrit originals from which the Chinese version was made. Great impetus to the work of translation was given by the influx of Buddhist missionaries on the conversion of the Chinese monarch in the middle of the first century of our era.† Thus, at the very time when Christianity was being carried westward into Europe by St. Paul and his companions, Buddhism was being carried eastward into China by missionaries no less courageous and zealous for the faith which they believed.

As Buddha did not claim any revelation, so the canon stands alone among the sacred scriptures of the world in not assuming any special inspiration for its contents: "For the attainment of those previously unknown doctrines, the eye, the knowledge, the wisdom, and the light were developed within me."

We propose to carry out the good intentions of the Japanese ambassador by giving an account of the life and teaching of Buddha as it is accepted by the popular Buddhist mind, apart

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\* Vassilief thinks that writing was not known in India until long after Buddha's death. "Der Buddhismus," 1860.

† Remusat, "Foe-koue-ki," p. 41; Beal, "Fa-Hian," pp. 20-22.

from the metaphysical speculations of the philosophical schools in the scholastic and mystic periods.

I. *The Personality*.—In the fifth century B.C. there arose in the civilised world the remarkable intellectual movement of which Pythagoras is the representative in Europe, Zoroaster in Persia, Buddha in India, Confucius in China. Buddha is more fortunate than the others in having bequeathed to the world not only words of wisdom, as did they, but also the example of a life in which the loftiest morality was softened and beautified by unbounded charity and devotion to the good of his fellow-men. His walk through life was along "the path whose entrance is purity, whose goal is love." The personality of the Buddha is still a living power in the world, and by its exquisite beauty it attracts the heart and affection of more than one-third of the human race.

Buddha is not, strictly speaking, the name of a man. The word means "The Enlightened," and is the title applied to a succession of men whose wisdom has enlightened mankind. It has, however, become identified with the founder of Buddhism, Gautama. Buddhists think it irreverent to say the word "Gautama," so they speak of him as the Buddha, Śakya-muni, "the sage of the Śakyas,"\* "the lion of the tribe of Śakya," "the king of righteousness," "the blessed one." Gautama, then, is *the* Buddha, and his followers have been called Buddhists from the characteristic feature of the founder's office—he who enlightens mankind. Gautama claimed to be nothing more than a link in the chain of Buddhas who had preceded and who should follow him.† This modest claim is characteristic of great reformers: Confucius said, "I only hand on, I cannot create new things; I believe in the ancients." Mohammed claimed to return to the creed of Abraham, "the Friend." Nevertheless, the glory of a religion belongs to the founder, not to his predecessors nor his successors, he it is who makes all things new: and therefore it is to the life and teaching of Gautama that we must look for the mainspring of the religion. Buddha is one of the few founders of religion who did not claim a special revelation or inspiration: "I have heard these truths from no one," he said; "they are all self-revealed, they spring only from within myself." And he believed them to be true for all time: "The heavens may fall to earth, the earth become dust, the mountains may be removed, but my word cannot fail or be false."

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\* *Śakya* = the able ones: "These princes are *able* to found a kingdom and to govern it. Hence the name Śakya" ("Rom. Hist." 23). *Muni* comes from "man," to think; hence the thinker, the sage, the monk. Gautama is still the family name of the Rajput chiefs of Nagara, where Buddha was born.

† Traditional sayings of former Buddhas are translated in Beal's "Catena," pp. 158, 159.



Buddha commenced his preaching at the city of Benares on the banks of the Ganges, where Brahmanism was the religion of the mass of the people. He was a reformer. His reformation bears to Brahmanism the relation which Protestantism bears to Roman Catholicism, rather than that which Christianity does to Judaism, though it may be doubted whether a schism actually took place during Buddha's lifetime. It was primarily a protest against the sacrificial and sacerdotal system of the Brahmans; it rejected all bloody sacrifice, together with the priesthood and social caste so essentially bound up with them. The logical consequence of animal sacrifice he admirably showed in the words: "If a man, in worshipping the gods, sacrifices a sheep, and so does well, why should he not kill his child, his relations, or his dearest friend, in worshipping the gods, and so do better?" But while Buddhism was opposed to sacerdotalism, it was in close alliance with the teaching of the philosophers, for all its main positions may be traced to their origin in the teaching of the philosophical schools of India.\* Buddha states and accepts the high aim of these schools: "All the different systems of philosophy are designed to one end—to overthrow the strongholds of sin." He endeavoured to popularise this end of the philosophy of the day, and to bring it within the comprehension of the poorest and most outcast of the people. Indeed, one secret of his success lay in the fact that he preached to the poor as well as to the rich, and that the common people heard him gladly.

II. *The Birth and Early Manhood.*—The birth of Buddha† is veiled in a myth, the outward objective expression of the inner subjective idea, which is the ethical centre of his religion: Unbounded self-sacrifice and tenderest compassion for mankind. The scriptures say that Buddha, having by the Law of Evolution passed through the various stages of existence, at length attained the perfection of being in the highest of the heavens. It was not necessary for him to be again re-born; he was prepared to pass into the rest and repose of Nirvâna. Nevertheless, "he was so moved by the wretched condition of mankind and all sentient creatures, that by the force of his exceeding love"‡ he took upon him the form of man once more, in order that he might "save the world" by teaching them the way to escape from their wretchedness, and attain that perfection to which he had attained, and enjoy the rest and repose of Nirvâna. "I am now," he said, "about to assume a body, to descend and be born among men, to give peace and rest

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\* Prof. Monier Williams gives a popular sketch of these philosophical systems in "Indian Wisdom."

† M. Senart has investigated the story as a solar myth in his "Essai sur la légende du Bouddha, son Caractère et ses Origines." Paris, 1876.

‡ "Catena," pp. 15, 130.

to all flesh, and to remove all sorrows and grief from the world."\* He chose as his earthly mother the wife of the king of Kapilavastu, named Mâyâ, who was henceforth known as the "Holy Mother Mâyâ." He was her first and only son.† In an account of his incarnation contained in a Chinese translation made in the year 194 A.D., this event is literally translated : "The Holy Ghost descended into the womb."‡ The purity of Maya is described in a very beautiful sutra :

"As the lotus springs unsullied from the water,  
So was thy body pure and spotless in the womb.  
What joy and delight was it to thy mother,  
Desiring no carnal joys, but rejoicing only in the law,  
Walking in perfect purity, with no stain of sin," &c., &c. §

The "Incarnation Scene" is frequently met with in the Buddhist sculptures at Sanchi and Amravati, which are about the date of the Christian era. Around this myth there have gathered a string of legends which bear a striking resemblance, and a no less striking difference, both to the Gospel history and the apocryphal Gospels. On the day of the child's birth the heavens shone with divine light, and the earth shook withal, while angelic hosts sang, "To-day Buddha is born on earth, to give joy and peace, to give light to those in darkness, and sight to the eyes of the blind." The light shone because Buddha should hereafter enlighten the darkness of men's minds, the earth shook withal because he should shake the powers of evil which afflict the world. An aged hermit of the Himalayas is divinely guided to the spot where the young child lay in the arms of Mâyâ, his mother, and placing his venerable head under the tiny feet of the infant, || spoke of him as the "Deliverer of sin, and sorrow, and death." Weeping, he repeated the following canticle :

"Alas, I am old and stricken in years ;  
The time of my departure is at hand ;  
I rejoice and yet I am sad.  
The misery and the wretchedness of man shall disappear,  
And at his bidding peace and joy shall everywhere flourish."

And he added : "Alas ! while others shall find deliverance for

\* "Rom. Hist." p. 33.

† St. Jerome says : "It is handed down as a tradition among the Gymnosophists of India, that Buddha, the founder of their system, was brought forth by a virgin from her side."—Cont. Jovian, i.

‡ "Catalogue of Buddhist Tripitaka," in the India Office, 1876, pp. 115, 116.

§ "Romantic History of Buddha," p. 275, a Chinese translation from the Sanskrit, made in the year 69 or 70 A.D. "We may therefore safely suppose," says Mr. Beal, "that the original work was in circulation in India for some time previous to that date."—Intr. vi.

|| In Spier's "Ancient India" there is a drawing from the Cave of Ajanta, which represents the old man with the infant Buddha in his arms (p. 248).



their sins, and arrive at perfect wisdom through the preaching of this child, I shall not be found among them." The princes of the tribe of Śākya brought rare and costly gifts and presented them to the child; but the brightness of his person outshone the lustre of the jewels, and a voice from heaven proclaimed:

"In comparison with the fulness of true religion  
The brightness of gems is as nothing."

The neighbouring king of Maghadha is advised to send an army to destroy the child who is to become a universal monarch; but he answers, "Not so, if the child become a holy man and wield a righteous sceptre, then it is fitting for me to reverence and obey him, and we shall enjoy peace and safety under his rule. If he become a Buddha, and his love and compassion leads him to save and deliver all flesh, then we ought to listen to his teaching, and become his disciples." He astonished his teachers when he entered the schools of letters and of arms: they said, "Surely this is the instructor of gods and men, who condescends to seek for a master!" He simply said, "It is well; I am self-taught."\* This is the only record of his youth until his twenty-ninth year, when he was converted.

It is difficult to assign any definite date to those legends. "All evidence tends to prove that they are earlier than the Christian era."† There is little doubt, however, that they arose after the death of Buddha; because he would have rejected all such appeals to the miraculous. Buddha never refers to them,‡ and when some enthusiasts sought a sign from him to convince the people, he answered, "The miracle my disciples should show is to hide their good deeds and confess their faults."§ The chief are sculptured on the rails of the tope at Sanchi, which is a sort of Buddhist picture-Bible carved in stone.||

These legends are of comparatively small value, for they add nothing to the glory of the man's life, which, after his "conversion," became a life of the loftiest moral perfection and the noblest self-devotion to the good of others. Born the son of a king, he was brought up in all the luxury of an Oriental court. From this epicurean life he was converted by three sights—

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\* Cf. Apoc. Epistle of Thomas vi. Pseudo-Matthew xxx. xxxi. The same legend reappears in the biography of Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion (1469 A.D.). "The Adi Granth," p. 602. Printed for India Office, 1877.

† Beal's "Rom. Hist." ix.

‡ Christ never refers to the events recorded in St. Matthew and St. Luke i. and ii.

§ So Mohammed's reply: "My Lord be praised! am I more than a man sent as an apostle? . . . Angels do not commonly walk the earth, or God would have sent an angel to preach His truth to you."

|| Fergusson's "Tree and Serpent Worship," p. 182.

an old man tottering under the weight of his years, a young man tossing in the raging heat of fever, and a corpse lying exposed by the roadside. These sights made him reflect that though he were now young and vigorous, yet he, too, was liable to the sorrows of old age, disease, and death.

While he pondered in his heart over these things, he saw a holy mendicant with the placid expression of a disciplined spirit who had renounced all pleasures and had attained to perfect calm. He asked who the holy man might be, and was told: "Great Prince! This man constantly practises virtue and flees vice; he gives himself to charity, and restrains his appetites and desires; he is at peace with all men; and, so far as he can, he does good to all, and is full of sympathy for all."

These sights depressed his spirits, and he sought for means to escape from such sorrows, if, indeed, they were not irrevocably fixed upon all men alike. Herodotus mentions a Thracian tribe who mourned when a child was born and rejoiced when any one died. The same sad aspect of life oppressed the mind of the young prince. His sadness was no selfish desire of escape from his own troubles; it arose from intense sympathy with the sorrows of others. As he walked about the palace, men heard him repeat: "Nothing on earth is stable, nothing is real. Life is passing as a spark of fire or the sound of a lute. There must be a Supreme Intelligence wherein we can rest. If I attained it, I could then bring light to men. If I were free myself, I could deliver the world."

This thought of the salvation of mankind and the deliverance of the world became the dominant aim of his life. On the birth of his first-born son, the people flocked joyfully to the palace gates; but the sight almost moved him to tears: "All these people are without the means of salvation, without any hope of deliverance, constantly tossed on the sea of life and death, old age and disease; with no fear or care about their unhappy condition, with no one to guide or instruct them; ever wandering in the dark, and unable to escape. Thinking thus, his heart was moved with love, and he felt himself strengthened in his resolution to provide some sure ground for the salvation of the world." In the night watches he hears a voice calling him: "A man whose own body is bound with fetters, and who yet desires to release others from their bonds, is like a blind man who undertakes to lead the blind." In the daytime the songs of the singing-girls seemed to say: "Quit the world, prepare thy heart for supreme wisdom; . . . thy time is come, it behoveth thee to leave house and home." He again hears the divine voice—

"Whatever miseries of life or death are in the world,  
The Great Physician is able to cure all."



It is in vain that his father tries to dissuade him ; he replies, " Your majesty cannot prevail against my resolve ; for what is it ? Shall a man attempt to prevent another escaping from a burning house ? " At length his resolution is taken : " I will go ; the time is come to seek the highest law of life." \*

Very touching is the account of the temptations of the young prince. When his child was born he said, " This is a new tie, yet it must be broken." At midnight he seeks the chamber where lay his wife ; he pauses in the doorway—their first-born lay upon her breast. He fears to take the infant in his arms lest he should wake the mother. He tears himself away, vowing that he will return not as husband and father, but as teacher and saviour. He rides forth to the city gate ; here Mâra, the evil one, meets him, and now by threats, now by the offer of the " kingdoms of the world " for his empire, seeks to turn him from his resolution. " A thousand honours such as those you offer have no charm for me to-day. I seek enlightenment. Therefore begone, hinder me not."

Riding far enough from the city to baffle pursuit, he turns to take one farewell look ; he then dismounts, strips himself of his princely robe, and putting on a mendicant's dress, takes an alms-bowl † to beg his daily bread, and determines henceforth to be known by no other name than the Recluse of the Sakyas, Sakya-muni.

Many were the temptations which now beset him ; for " as a shadow follows the body, so did Mâra follow the Blessed One, striving to throw every obstacle in his way towards the Buddhahood." The nausea of the mendicant's food, the recollections of the affection, the home, the kingdom he had renounced, tried him sorely. His father sent to entreat him to return to him,

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\* The " fulness of the time " is marked by the conjunction of a certain star with the moon.

† The legend of Buddha's alms-bowl migrated to Europe as the legend of the Sanc Greal. Fa-hian, pp. 162–164. " Mémoires sur les Contrées Occidentales," par Hiouen-Thsang, en A.D. 648. Stanislas Julien, i. 81. Fa-hian was told that when men became very bad, the alms-bowl should disappear, and then the law of Buddha would gradually perish. Hiouen-Thsang caught a glimpse of it in a cave : " Suddenly there appeared on the east wall a halo of light, large as an alms-bowl, but it vanished instantly. Again it appeared and vanished." Both these characteristics of the legend are unconsciously preserved by Mr. Tennyson in his " Legend of the Holy Grail " :—

" What is it ?

The phantom of a cup that comes and goes.

. If a man

Could touch or see it, he was healed at once

By faith of all his ills. But then the times

Grew to such evil, that the holy cup

Was caught away to heaven and disappeared."

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to his wife and child; he answered, "I know my father's great love for me, but then I tremble to think of the miseries of old age, disease, and death, which shall soon destroy this body. I desire above all things to find a way of deliverance from these evils; and therefore I have left my home and kinsfolk to seek after the complete possession of supreme wisdom. A wise man regards his friends as fellow-travellers, each one going along the same road, yet soon to be separated as each goes to his own place. If you speak of a fit time and an unfit time to become a recluse, my answer is, that Death knows nothing of one time or another, but is busy gathering his victims at all times. I wish to escape from old age, disease, and death, and have no leisure to consider whether this be the right time or not." The beauty of his person and the wisdom of his mind induced a neighbouring king to offer him a share in his kingdom; "I seek not an earthly kingdom," he replied; "I seek to become enlightened."

To attain this enlightenment, he first studied under the Brahmins, but he soon found that they and the Vedas could not help him. He next joined some hermits in the jungle, and underwent such austerities that, while his body became "worn and haggard," his fame as an ascetic "spread abroad like the sound of a great bell hung in the canopy of the sky." But after six years' trial, he found that the road to enlightenment did not lie through asceticism. Therefore he abandoned it, and annunciated one of the fundamental truths of his system: "Moderation in all things." He had tried the two extremes of luxury and asceticism; true enlightenment was not to be found in either. Then he learned that, "like as the man who would discourse sweet music must tune the strings of his instrument to the medium point of tension, so he who would arrive at the condition of Buddha must exercise himself in the medium course of discipline." \*

Once more he went begging through the villages. At length the day of enlightenment came, as he was seated one evening under a tree, which for many centuries afterwards became the most interesting object of the pilgrim's pilgrimage.† The temptation which preceded that supreme moment is most touching. A peasant woman led her little child by the hand to offer food to the holy man. The sight carried back his thoughts to

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\* Cf. the philosophical position of the Hebrew Preacher: "Be not wise overmuch; be not foolish overmuch; be not righteous overmuch; be not wicked overmuch" (Eccles. vii. 16, 17).

† Asoka's daughter brought to Ceylon in 245 B.C. a branch of this tree (*Ficus religiosa*). The branch grew, and is now "the oldest historical tree in the world." Its history is preserved in a series of continuous chronicles, which are brought together by Sir Emerson Tennent, "Ceylon," vol. ii. pp. 613 sq. Fergusson, "Tree and Serpent Worship," p. 56.

the home he had left. The love of wife and child, the wealth and power of place, came upon him with a force overwhelmingly attractive. It was a sore temptation.\* He agonised in doubt. But as the sun set, the religious side of his nature won the victory; he came forth purified in the struggle; he abandoned all—wife, child, home, princely power—in order to win deliverance for mankind: "I vow from this moment to deliver the world from the thralldom of death and of the evil one. I will procure the salvation of all men, and lead them across to the other shore." The supernatural side of this struggle is described with all the wealth of Oriental imagery. Mâra† with his daughters and angels alternately rage against and caress him; all nature is convulsed at the conflict "between the Saviour of the world and the Prince of evil;" the earth shakes as she only does when a man's virtue reaches perfection or is utterly lost. The Buddhist description bears a striking resemblance to the passage in "Paradise Regained" in which the "patient Son of God" was tempted in the wilderness, and sat "unappalled in calm and sinless peace."‡ Buddha sat "unmoved from his fixed purpose, firm as Mount Sumeru," until Mâra, having exhausted all his powers, fell at his feet in terror; and the cry went through the worlds of heaven and hell, "Mâra is overcome, the Prince is conqueror." Then Buddha's mind was enlightened, and he saw the way of salvation for all living creatures.

"From out the darkness and gloomy night of the world,  
The gross darkness and ignorance that envelop mankind,  
This Holy One, having attained the perfection of wisdom,  
Shall cause to appear the brightness and glory of his own light."

The tree beneath which Buddha attained enlightenment and the Buddhaship has become to his followers a symbol as expressive of their faith as is the cross to the Christian. The victory won beneath that tree has brightened, and to this day brightens, the lives of more men and women than does any other victory in the history of the world; for out of the thousand million inhabitants which it is computed people this earth, 450,000,000 are Buddhists. On that day heaven and earth sang together for joy, flowers fell around the Holy One; "there ceased to be ill-feeling or hatred in the hearts of men; all wants of food and drink and clothing were supplied; the blind saw, the deaf

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\* The temptation scene is figured on the middle beam of the northern gateway at Sanchi. Frontispiece to "Tree and Serpent Worship."

† "Mâra est le démon de l'amour, du péché et de la mort; c'est le tentateur et l'ennemi du Buddha."—*Burnouf, Introd.* 76. Mâra, as the night-mare, still torments English people.

‡ Mr. Rhys Davids has worked out the parallel in "Buddhism," S.P.C.K. Ed.



heard, the dumb spake; the prisoners in the lower worlds were released; and all living creatures found rest and peace.”\*

III. *The Enlightenment*.—What was the enlightenment which made the young prince the Enlightened One, the Buddha, who should enlighten the world? It was *The Way* by which men could escape from the sorrows of old age, disease, and death. The Way was contained in the Four Sublime Truths, or Noble Truths, proclaimed in his first sermon, the Sutra of “The Foundation of Righteousness.” These truths are—(1) Sorrow exists; (2) Sorrow increases and accumulates through desires and cravings after objects of sense; (3) Sorrow may be destroyed by entering on the “Four Paths;” (4) The Four Paths are perfect faith, perfect thought, perfect speech, perfect deed.† These paths lead to the rest and repose of Nirvâna.

Thus Buddha taught that it is through perfection of life that men attain enlightenment and knowledge. “Not study,” he said, “not asceticism, but the purification of the mind from all unholy desires and passions,”—a position we may place side by side with the words of Christ: “If any man willeth to do God’s will, he shall know the doctrine.” The perfection of goodness, bringing with it the perfection of wisdom, Buddha taught as the end and aim of our existence. When man has attained this perfection, his soul is freed from all slavery to the objects of sense, and as there is therefore no longer any need for him to be reborn, he passes into the rest and repose of Nirvâna, which is the perfection of being.

This religion of perfection Buddha based upon the cornerstones of self-conquest and self-sacrifice. Self-conquest is developed by the observance of the Five Commandments: “Thou shalt do no murder: Thou shalt not commit adultery: Thou shalt not steal: Thou shalt not lie:‡ Thou shalt not become intoxicated.” The man who keeps these commandments orders his conduct aright, and “remains like the broad earth, unvexed; like the pillar of the city gate, unmoved; like the tranquil lake, unruffled.”§ Self-sacrifice is to be shown by an unbounded charity, and a devotion to the good of others which rises to an enthusiasm for humanity.

\* “Rom. Hist.” p. 225.

† Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion (1469–1538 A.D.), taught that Nirvâna was to be reached by the four paths of—(1) Extinction of individuality, (2) Disregard of ceremonies, (3) Conversion of foes into friends, (4) The knowledge of good. “The Adi Granth, or the Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs,” by Trumpp; Trübner, 1877.

‡ The absolute necessity of truthfulness is constantly enforced. Buddha once said to Mâra, “O Mâra! I am born a Kshatriya, and therefore I scorn to lie.” This oath of the Kshatriya is the origin of “the word of honour” in chivalry. “Rom. Hist.” 222 n.

§ Dhap., xc.–xcvi.

The motive for this self-conquest and self-sacrifice was, that by their development to perfection of character they would enable men to escape from the sorrows and miseries of life. This motive appealed to the common sense of mankind, for Buddha taught that every thought, word, and deed bear their own consequences. Goodness is rewarded, badness is punished, in the way of natural consequence; and these consequences continue through countless births and re-births on earth, in heaven, in hell. We are now reaping, in this present stage of our existence, the natural harvest of the seeds of good or evil sown by us in previous stages; we shall in the future reap the harvest of the sowing in the present. Whatever a man hath sown he is now reaping; whatever a man is now sowing, that shall he also hereafter reap. We *are* that which we have made ourselves in the past; we *shall be* that which we are now making ourselves. A man is born blind because in a previous stage of existence he indulged in the lust of the eye; a man has quick hearing, because in a previous stage he loved to listen to the reading of the law. Each new birth is conditioned by the *Karma*—the aggregation of the merit and the demerit of previous births—the conduct of life.

A man once asked the Master, "From some cause or other mankind receive existence; but there are some persons who are exalted, others who are mean; some who die young, others who live to a great age; some who suffer from various diseases, some who have no sickness until they die; some who are of the lowest caste, some who are of the highest;—what is the cause of these differences?" To this Buddha replied: "All sentient beings have their own individual Karma. . . . Karma comes by inheritance from previous births. Karma is the cause of all good and evil. It is the difference in the Karma which causes the difference in the lot of men, so that some men are low and some exalted, some are miserable and some are happy. A good action well done, a bad action wickedly done, when they reach maturity, equally bear inevitable fruit."\* The Master himself had obtained the Buddhahood by the same law, "by the meritorious Karma of previous births." Step by step had he won his way; born as a bird, as a stag, as an elephant, through each successive stage of human rank and condition by continued births had he at last reached the highest elevation of purity and self-sacrifice; and now he has come into the world the Saviour

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\* Hardy's "Manual of Buddhism," pp. 445, 446. The Jews believed in the pre-existence of souls (St. John ix. 2); see Lightfoot's "Exercit. Talmud" on this passage. Alger's "Critical History of a Future Life," New York, 1867, for the history of the subject. There is an interesting passage on pre-existence in Lessing's "Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts," which is pure Buddhism.



of mankind, to teach them the way by which they might all attain to the same perfection.

Of the first origin of things, of the first birth, Buddha knew nothing. "When he was asked whether the existence of the world is eternal or non-eternal, he made no reply," because he considered such inquiries of no profit. He starts from the material world and the conscious beings in it. Here he finds all things changing by the law of cause and effect; nothing continues in one stage. Then this reflection came into his mind: Birth exists, and is the cause of decay, disease, and death. Therefore, destroy birth, and the effects of birth are destroyed likewise; and this world, which is but a mass of sorrows culminating in decay and death, will be annihilated.

As of the beginning of existence, so of the end of existence Buddha knows nothing. He traces the progress of the human being as it develops towards perfection through a series of ever-ascending heavens, until the last and final heaven is attained. Gradually, by a series of steps, has all imperfection been purified, and man has become perfect, so far as the mind of man can conceive of perfection. And when made perfect, there is no further need for it to be re-born, because no more births could make it more humanly perfect than it is. Therefore it passes into the rest and repose of Nirvâna, that transcendental stage of being which overpasses the horizon of man's conception. What the nature of that state may be Buddha knows not—it is Nirvâna. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man."\* Beautifully is it described as "the eternal place of bliss, where there is no more sorrow, no more disease, nor old age, nor death." It is the "home of peace," "the other shore of the ocean of existence," the "shore of salvation," the "harbour of refuge," the "medicine of all evils." The rest and repose of Nirvâna may be obtained on earth by the man who attains the ideal holiness. Indeed, Mr. Rhys Davids proposes to translate Nirvâna by the word "holiness—holiness, that is, in the Buddhist sense, *perfect peace, goodness, and wisdom*."† Some people, not in harmony with the mind of Buddha, have spoken of Nirvâna as though it meant annihilation. But there is no thought of annihilation in the mind of the Founder who said, "I devote myself wholly to moral culture, so as to arrive at the highest condition of moral rest, Nirvâna."‡ There can be no thought of the loss of personal being in the place whose four characteristics are—"Personality, Purity, Happiness, Eternity."§

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\* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

† "Buddhism," p. 112; Childers' Pali Dict., "Nibbanam."

‡ "Catena," p. 183.

§ Letter, Dr. Rost, p. i.

Indeed, the controversy between the Confucians and the Buddhists in China turns upon the belief in a future life as a motive for virtue, as may be seen from the biographical section of the history of the Sung dynasty: "The instructions of Confucius include only a single life; they do not reach to the future state, with its illimitable results. His only motive to virtue is the happiness of posterity. The only consequence of vice he names is present suffering. The reward of the good does not go beyond worldly honours. The aims of Buddha, on the other hand, are illimitable. His religion removes care from the heart, and saves men from all danger. Its one sentiment is mercy seeking to save. It speaks of hell to deter from sin; it points to heaven that men may desire its happiness. It exhibits the Nirvâna as the spirit's final refuge, and tells us of a body (*dharmakâya*) to be possessed under other conditions, long after the present body has passed away." \*

Thus Buddha taught that the aim of life is perfection, and that rest and repose can only be found in the perfection of the moral and spiritual being. How closely this coincides with the teaching of Christ on this point five hundred years later, will appear from the words, "Be ye *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"—*τέλειοι*, complete, all-embracing, godlike in your charity and love to others, like the Father, who sendeth His rain, and maketh His sun to shine both on the evil and the good. Again, "He that is *perfect* shall be as his master,"—*κατηρτισμένος*, fully instructed, well conditioned, knowing his duty and doing it.† So also St. Paul urges men to arrive at the "perfect man" (*εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον*), "to the measure of the stature of Christ's fulness."

It is quite true that Buddha did not give as the standard of ideal perfection "our Father in the heavens," that most touching name by which the early Aryan clan spoke of God, and which reappears in the language of their European descendants. Buddha, as a rationalist, knew nothing of a personal God, but only of His manifestation in the law of Karma.

There are some who have described Buddhism as atheistic, but the mind which refuses to predicate attributes of God which it cannot prove is different from the mind which boldly asserts "There is no God." It may be difficult to prove the

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\* "Travels of Fa-hian," introd. p. xxvi. "If we look in the *Dhammapada*," says Prof. Max Müller, "at every passage where Nirvâna is mentioned, there is not one that would require that its meaning should be annihilation; while most, if not all, would become perfectly unintelligible if we assigned to the word Nirvâna that meaning."—*Buddhaghosha*, p. 41.

† The Buddhist spirit of this passage was pointed out to the writer by the veteran scholar, Mr. Bryant Hodgson.



existence of a personal God ; it is not less difficult to prove His non-existence. Buddha neither asserted nor denied. Buddha is accused of atheism because he rejected Indra, Brahma, and the whole material pantheon ; but the accusation comes with a bad grace from those who must know that the early Christians were called *ἄθεοι*, because they refused to believe in Jupiter and the other divinities of Greece and Rome. Buddha had a very high conception of deity ; but so far did he push the refinement of deity or the divine existence, that he not only eliminated from it all human conditions and relationships, but he thought that it must embrace all existence. In other words, nothing really exists but *it*, and phenomenal existence is really phenomenal. Therefore, the leading idea of his religion, when regarded as a rule of faith for shaping our lives and raising them to the ideal of the divine, is that we must not only get rid of all the imperfections included in the idea of ill-conduct, but also the limitations included in the idea of individual existence. This is not pantheism, but, if anything, transcendentalism—a conception of deity which transcends human thought.

The idea of a perfect life on earth Buddha taught not merely by word of mouth, but also by the moral purity and the lofty purpose of his character, and by his devotion to the good of his fellow-men. Every Buddhist believes that it was Buddha's "exceeding great love" which moved him with compassion for suffering humanity, and brought him back from heaven to earth to teach mankind the way of salvation. His enemies blamed his disciples for applauding his saying, "Let all the sins that have been committed fall upon me, in order that the world may be delivered."\* This spirit of self-sacrifice we constantly find in his disciples. For instance, King Rantiveda, who endured hunger and thirst that he might relieve others, says, "I desire not from the Lord that highest destiny which is accomplished in the eight perfections, neither do I ask to be exempted from future births. I seek to live within all corporeal beings, and endure their pains, so that they may be freed from suffering."† The traditions show this self-sacrifice pushed to the point of extravagance, in stories of Buddha having, in previous stages of existence, given his body to a famished tigress to enable her to succour her young. "As a mother," he said, "even at the risk of her own life, protects her son, her only son, so let there be good-will without measure among all beings. Let unmeasured good-will—unhindered love and friendliness—prevail in the whole world, above, below, around. If a man remain in this state of mind at

\* Max Müller, "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 80. A similar noble sentiment was expressed by Moses (Ex. xxxii. 32), and by St. Paul (Rom. ix. 3).

† "Bhâgavata Purâna," ix. 21.

all times, then is brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Even in this world has holiness been found.'" One of the highest acts of charity is to pray to a Buddha "from a desire to save all living creatures." "Our object should be by personal profit to profit others." "It is because men seek their own profit that sorrows come upon them." "Love is the greatest of all things, and frees the man whose heart is full of it from all bonds of ignorance and sin."\* "When a man abstains from evil, and experiences in his heart a feeling of universal charity and love, and desires to arrive at perfection in order that he may benefit others, and from no selfish desire, then, like dry wood, the fire may be easily kindled." Indeed, Buddha is described as "that great man who, unaided, works out salvation for the world."†

IV. *The Teacher*.—Buddha, having attained this enlightenment, shrank at first from the task of proclaiming it to the world. Men, weighed down by sorrow, oppressed by false teaching, would not be able to understand this law of enlightenment; had he not better remain a solitary hermit? As he thought thus, the divine voice of his better nature spoke, "Oh, do not act thus; be not silent, but, for the sake of man sunk in sin, declare thy law! Let thy love constrain thee to do so, let thy compassionate heart move thee to declare thy law; for though the world be wicked, yet are there many prepared to receive this message of love and to be converted, many who would otherwise perish. Let the World-honoured One, therefore, resolve to preach the law for the good of others." Then by the power of his wisdom he beheld the various conditions of men, in ignorance and in knowledge, like the lotus flowers in a tank, some emerging from the mud but not yet above the water, others above the water but not yet expanded, others just opening, waiting for his word to complete their development. Then his resolution was formed, and he said, "I am willing now to open the gate of immortality. If any will listen, let them come gladly; let them hearken as I declare the tidings of this law."

The first persons to whom he preached the kingdom of righteousness, or "turned the wheel of the law," were the five hermits who had been with him in the time of his penance, and who now dwelt in the Deer Park near Benares. Afterwards he went to preach in the city. An acquaintance met him on the road, and inquired whither he was going. "I am going to Benares," he answered, "to establish a kingdom of righteousness,‡ by giving light to those who are shrouded in darkness, and by opening to all

\* Cf. the Hebrew proverb, "Love covereth all sin" (x. 12), quoted in 1 Peter iv. 8.

† Burnouf, "Lotus de la Bonne Loi," p. 332.

‡ This is the translation proposed by Mr. Rhys Davids for the usual Buddhist phrase, "to turn the wheel of the law."—*Encyclopædia Britannica*.



men the gate of immortality." At Kapilavastu, he offered salvation to his father: "My father, when a man has found a treasure, it is his duty to offer the most precious of his jewels to his father first. Do not delay; let me share with you the treasure I have found." His wife had fasted and wept during his absence; he went to her, for he said, "She is exceeding sorrowful. Unless her sorrow be allowed to take its course, her heart will break. She may embrace me. Do not stop her." But when she saw him enter, no longer the husband she remembered, but a recluse with shaven head and face, and in the yellow \* robe, she fell at his feet, and held them, watering them with her tears. Then, feeling how great was the distance between them, she rose and stood on one side. So they parted either from other, and in after years she became a Buddhist nun. His son came and asked for his inheritance. "The boy asks for an earthly inheritance which availeth nothing. I will give him a spiritual inheritance which fadeth not away. Let him be admitted among us."

Buddha preached to all men alike, but it was to the poor that his teaching came home with peculiar force; for he broke down the *caste* which degraded society; he taught them the way to escape from the sorrows of their daily life, and he held out to them a brighter future, dependent upon their goodness and their charity. He showed his love and compassion for them by becoming a poor man himself, although born son of a king. The people were astonished: "Our young prince is gone mad!"† The priests were indignant that one not of their order should teach the people; they were still more indignant when they heard him announce that no one was of a caste too low and despised but that he could attain to the moral perfection and the enlightenment of Buddha himself. Ananda, his favourite disciple, meets a poor Chandala woman beside a well of water, and asks her for a drink. She tells him she is a Chandala,‡ an outcast; but he replied, "My sister, I ask not after thy caste and thy family, I only ask for a draught of water." She became a disciple. "Not by birth," said Buddha, "does one become a slave (*vasala*), not by birth does one become a Brahman; one becomes a slave by bad conduct, as one by good conduct becomes a Brahman." "Not by plaited hair or family shall one

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\* This colour was first chosen as one of contempt, being the colour of old cast-off rags of white cotton cloth; it soon became the sign of the highest honour (Dhap. 9).

† Klaproth, Journ. As., vii. 181, qd. by Köppen.

‡ The Chandalas were the outcasts of Indian society; they had no caste. When they entered a town or market-place, they struck a piece of wood to keep themselves separate. People hearing their sound, avoided touching or brushing against them.

become a Brahman ; for what avail thy plaited hair and garment of skins when within thee there is impurity, and the outside only thou makest clean. He who walks truthfully and righteously, he is the true Brahman." \*

No one was too unlearned. When Patisma, who could only learn one gâtha, attained supreme wisdom, men exclaimed, "How hath this man this wisdom?" Buddha replied, "Learning need not be much ; conduct is the chief thing. Patisma has allowed the words of the gâtha to penetrate his spirit. . . . To explain one sentence of the law, and to walk according to it, this is the way to find supreme wisdom." †

No one was too poor to win Buddha's praise. He tells the story of a poor old woman who wished to offer him a gift. She had only two small coins (mites), so she spent them in buying a little oil, which she took to a sacred place, and burned it in a lamp to his honour. The lights of all the rich folk were extinguished, but hers burned on continually.‡ Poor people were able with a few flowers to fill his alms-bowl, although there were rich men who could not fill it with many baskets of flowers.§

During a famine a certain Pratyeka Buddha got up early one morning, and putting on his robe, took his alms-dish in his hand, and entered the city of Benares, where he begged from door to door. He obtained nothing, so he went home again, washed his alms-bowl, and sat down. Now there was in Benares a certain poor man who had watched the holy man, and seen that he received nothing ; so he went to him, and invited him to his house to share all that he had, which was just one measure of coarse cockle-seed. A servant girl, whose mistress had refused to relieve a dirty old man, ugly and graceless, begged her daily portion of meal, and gave it in charity to the man ; "for," said she, "in holy men one does not look for comeliness of person, but for purity of heart."

But not only did he preach to the poor and the low-caste, he preached to the rich and the high-caste also, and gathered disciples from all ranks of society. To all he laid down as the characteristic of the "true disciple, the disciple indeed"—"He ministers to the worthy, does harm to none, gives honour to whom honour is due, loves righteousness and righteous conversation, rejoices in meditating on the law, reflects in his life the divine wisdom, practises self-discipline in order to lead a pure and chaste life, always does good to those around him." For one class, indeed, he made special provision—the hermits. Brahman-

\* Dhap. 393, 394. "Young philosophers assume a cloak and grow a beard, and say, 'I am a philosopher.'"—*Epictetus*, iv. 8. Cf. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

† Dhap. xvi.

‡ Beal's Letter to Rost, p. 7.

§ "Travels of Fa-Hian," p. 38.



ism had developed by its teaching men who retired from the world under vows of chastity and poverty. Buddha had himself tried their system, and it had failed to give rest and repose to his spiritual being. He now offered to those ascetics the way by which they might escape from the sorrows of life and find spiritual rest. The way of salvation was the same for all men, but for those who desired to live a higher life he provided special "counsels of perfection." Hence there sprang the elaborate conventual system which so keenly exercised the speculation of the early Jesuit missionaries, and which is so powerful to this day in Buddhist countries. The monastic order was bound by vows of celibacy and poverty ; but those vows did not bring in themselves merit, they were only to be regarded as a help to the men and women who bound themselves by them. All men and women were admitted without distinction of caste, and no one who was under age was received without the consent of their parents. They were not priests, for they neither offered sacrifice nor prayers. Originally they lived under trees, but they soon assembled in religious houses—the men in monasteries, the women in convents. Their time was spent in meditation, which is the effort of the "true self" to obtain freedom from the trammels of sense. "Cleansed from all personal defilement, the candidate," says Buddha, "comes out of the world, and is truly a homeless one—a disciple indeed." Henceforth he must give himself up to work and chastity, for "the man who has left home to become a Shaman, and yet gives way to idleness and sloth, or whose mind hankers after impure indulgence, is like the rotten tree against which the wind blows, which can hardly resist its force, but is soon blown down." \* To this day the admission of a neophyte is one of the most imposing ceremonies of the Buddhist culte.†

The number of inmates in some of the monasteries at the present day is enormous. Huc and Gabet found 4000 at Kounboun. When Father Bury saw the Chinese bonze tonsured, using the rosary, praying in an unknown tongue, and kneeling before images, he said, "There is not a piece of dress, not a sacerdotal function, not a ceremony of the court of Rome, which the devil has not copied in this country ;" and the young De Beauvoir says, "What struck me was the outward resemblance of the religious ceremonies of the temples to those of our own religion. A bonze, surrounded with clouds of incense, and dressed in a

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\* Dhap. xxxiv.

† The rules of the order are translated in Beal's "Catena," p. 240. The initiation is described by Rhys Davids in "Buddhism," p. 161. The 250 Monastic rules were translated into Chinese from the Sanskrit about 70 A.D., and are therefore anterior to Christian Monasticism ("Catena," p. 189).

chasuble of red silk, officiated with great pomp.”\* The rock-cut Buddhist temples of India, which date 200 years before our era, have a nave, side aisles, and an apse round which the aisle is carried, resembling in form the early Christian churches. The rock-cut monasteries are also earlier in date than the Christian; there are between 700 and 800 in India, dating from 200 B.C. to 500 A.D.

The wife of Buddha and their son were among the first admissions into the conventual orders; others quickly followed. We read of a young man whom Buddha called: “Follow me, Yasa.” The youth passed on; but by night he returned secretly, and was so won over by the loving character of the Master, that he became his disciple. He ordained fifty-four of Yasa’s friends with the formula, “Follow me.” One day a rich young man came to Buddha clothed in costly garments and riding in a sumptuous chariot; he wished to become a disciple. Buddha, looking on him, bid him return home and selling all that he had, bestow his wealth in charity, so as to fit himself to become a disciple.† Some joyous youths, looking in a wood for a dancing-girl, who had left them after a night’s debauch, lighted on Buddha seated under a tree, and asked him if had seen the girl, he answered, “Listen to me, O youths! I will ask you a question. Whether is it better, think you, to find yourselves, or to find the woman whom ye seek?” They replied, “It would certainly be better to find ourselves.” Then Buddha invited them to sit down, and he taught them the way of salvation, and they became his disciples. He placed the highest ideal of purity before his disciples:—“Say to yourself, ‘I am placed in this sinful world; let me be as the spotless lily, unsoiled by the mud in which it grows.’ The heart is the busy contriver of lust; compose the heart, and those evil thoughts will all be still.”

To all men Buddha taught the laws which ought to govern the life of man. We will mention a few of these.

One day Buddha found his disciples in fierce anger because the Master had been reviled by a priest. Gently does he rebuke them: “Beloved! if others speak against me, or against the truth, be not displeased with them, or you will not be able to judge whether they speak truly or not.”

There was no limit to the forgiveness of injuries. Among the parting words he spoke on the evening of his death are these: “If a man should do you such injury as to chop your body in pieces limb for limb, yet you ought to keep your heart in perfect control; no anger or resentment should affect you, nor a word of reproach escape your lips; for if you once give way to a bitter

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\* Voyage, Japan, p. 151.

† “Rom. Hist.” 378.



thought, you have erred from the right way." "To a man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him to me, the more good shall return from me to him." He explains to a young nobleman named Chamah the four aspects under which patience exhibits itself in a son of Buddha: "When reviled, he revileth not again; when smitten, he bears the blow without resentment; when treated with anger and passion, he returns love and good-will; when threatened with death, he bears no malice." "Liberality, courtesy, kindness, and unselfishness are to society what the linch-pin is to the chariot."

He was singularly sympathetic, and could be touched by every tale of sorrow. The only child of a young mother died, and she carried the little cold body in her bosom, and going from house to house, entreated all she met to give her medicine to cure the child. Among others she met Buddha. "Lord and master," she said, "give me some medicine for my child." He bid her bring a handful of mustard from a house in which no child, parent, wife, husband, or slave, had died. She went to search; but she found that in every home death had entered, all said to her gently, "Lady, the living are few, the dead are many." Then at last, when she found no house free from death, the truth broke gently upon her. She laid down her baby-boy and returned to Buddha, who, when he saw her, said, "You thought that you alone had lost a son; the law of death is among all living creatures; there is nothing that abides." She became his disciple.\*

He set no limit to the power of faith. One day as Buddha was preaching by the side of a deep and rapid river, a man appeared on the other bank and walked across upon the surface of the water. The villagers, astonished, asked him by what power he did so marvellous a feat, he answered, "I asked the people on the other side if I might cross without a boat, they said, 'Yes, you can cross without fear;' then I walked over because I believed. Simple faith and nothing more enabled me to do so." Buddha said, "It is well spoken! well spoken! Faith like yours alone can save the world; such faith alone can enable men to walk across dryshod to the other shore." "Faith with obedience is the path of wisdom."†

"As flowers, when waved to and fro by the wind, scatter their scent far and wide, so wide is the renown of the accumulated merits of him who once is born and lives as he ought."

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\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. "Buddhism."

† Dhap. iv. The *Dhammapada* dates about 100 B.C.; it was translated into Chinese about 149 A.D., by An-shi-ko, a Prince-Royal of the Parthians (An-si), who left his kingdom, became a Buddhist monk, and went as a missionary to China.

Buddha once sent Ananda to ask an old man of eighty years why he had pulled down his old house and built a larger one, when death was so near. The man gave his reason, and stated the purposes of his numerous chambers. Buddha said, "'I have children and wealth,' such is the constant thought of the fool. He is not even master of himself; what then are his children and his money? The fool who says he is wise is foolish indeed." On the old man returning to his dwelling he suddenly fell dead from a blow.\*

He was very tender and loving towards children. A child one day came beside him as he sat at a feast, and covered himself over with his robe. The disciples wished to drive him away, but "the World-honoured One forbade them, and said, 'Let him stay, and let him hide himself in my robes.'"

V. *The Missionaries*.—The salvation of all men was a new thought in the world. It necessitated another thought equally new, viz., the duty of preaching the way of salvation to the world. The spirit of the true missionary inspired the soul of Buddha. As soon as he had sixty disciples, he said to them, "There is laid on us, who know the truth and who have been thereby made free, the duty of giving mankind the priceless blessing of salvation: go ye and visit the towns and villages throughout the land, preach the excellent law, and teach men to believe in the triple gem, Buddha, the law, and the church. Go ye, prepare the way for my coming; I will retire for a time into solitude." "Two by two" he sent them forth, and bid them take "only one robe, and one alms-bowl," for they were vowed to poverty. Poverty was their bride, Charity their sister. As an earlier Buddha, Wassabhu Tathagata, had said, "As the butterfly alights on the flower and destroys not its form or its sweetness, but sipping forthwith departs, so the mendicant follower of Buddha takes not nor hurts another's possessions."† When he was left alone Buddha reflected, "These disciples of mine are gone to convert the world. Delivered from sin and at peace, they can now deliver others." "I will not die until this holy religion becomes known to many people, and is grown great, and is universally published among men." He then went into the solitudes of Uravilva, and prepared himself by fasting and meditation for the conversion of the fire-worshipper Kasyapa and his brothers. This missionary plan he carried out every year. In the rainy season he gathered round him his disciples for instruction, and in the dry season he sent them forth to preach the way of salvation and to make disciples.

The history of these missionaries is full of interest. The spirit that animated them may be gathered from the story of one who

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\* Dhap. xiii.

† "Catena," p. 159.



asked leave to preach to his relations. "The people of that place," said Buddha, "are exceedingly violent. If they revile you, what will you do?"—"I will not revile again."—"If they strike you?"—"I will not strike in return."—"If they try to kill you?"—"Death is no evil in itself; I shall try neither to hasten nor to delay my departure." When threatened by an infuriated mob, one of the missionaries of later times confronted them with the words, "If the whole world were to come to terrify me, they could not cause me to be afraid." Then when he had persuaded the people to listen, he dismissed them with the simple words, "Do not hereafter give way to anger; do not destroy the crops, for all men love happiness. Show mercy to all living beings, and let men dwell in peace." \* Missionary zeal carried on the work after Buddha's death, whose disciples went forth into all lands; and it received a great impulse after the Council of Asoka. The names of the missionaries mentioned by the chronicler are inscribed on the relics found at some of the stations.† The old chronicler closes his first chapter on missions with the words, "Who would demur when the salvation of the world is at stake!"

The success of Buddhist missionaries is shown by the fact that after more than two thousand years "Buddhism rules supreme in Central, Northern, Eastern, and Southern Asia, and it gradually absorbs whatever there is left of aboriginal heathenism in that vast and populous area." ‡

VI. *Buddha's Death*.—When Buddha was eighty years of age he felt death coming on. He lay down under some sal trees, and calling his favourite disciples round him, he conversed with them long and earnestly. "It was now the middle of the night," says the Sutra; "all was perfectly quiet and still." For the sake of his disciples he gave a brief summary of the law. We will quote a few passages: "Beloved, after my death keep my word with reverence, as the poor man the pearl of great price which he has found. . . . Keep the body temperate in all things. . . . By self-control and upright thought aim at emancipation. Conceal none of your faults, but confess them before the congregation. . . . Be content with such things as are allotted you. Keep your senses within bound, just as a shepherd with his crook prevents the sheep from straying into the neighbouring pastures. . . . The heart is lord of the senses, govern therefore your heart well, for it is like a venomous snake, a wild beast, a cruel robber, a great

\* Max Müller, "Chips," vol. iv. p. 257.

† Köppen, "Die Religion des Buddha," p. 188.

‡ "Chips," vol. iv. p. 265.

fire. . . . Restrain therefore and keep in subjection your heart ; let it not get the mastery. Above all things, let modesty govern every thought and every word of your daily life. It is characteristic of truly great men to keep the rules of moral restraint without wavering, and to exercise patience without tiring. Strive after wisdom, for it is a lamp shining in darkness, a medicine for all diseases, a hatchet to cut down the tree of sorrow, a strong and trustworthy boat to cross the sea of old age, disease, and death. Continual perseverance is like a little fire that keeps on burning, but he who tires in the practice of religion is like a fire that goes out. Never forget self-examination and meditation ; for if you neglect them, all perseverance is at an end. In the practice of these you put on a helmet of defence, so that no sword can hurt you, and no enemy get the advantage over you. Think only of the words I have given you ; meditate on them on the mountain-pass and in the depths of the valley, in the congregation and in the solitary cell. I, as the good physician, knowing the disease which affects you, give this as a medicine fit for the case ; without this you die. Like the guide that knows the way, I direct you whither to go and what path to follow ; without this you perish."

As Socrates in the "Phædo"\* asks his friends if they have any doubts respecting the future life, so Buddha asks his disciples if they have doubts concerning the Four Noble Truths which are the foundation of his teaching. They answer, that their only thought is "one of grief that the World-honoured One is about to depart and enter Nirvana, just when we have entered on the practice of the law,—as in the night a flash of lightning lights up the way for the weary traveller and is gone, and he left to wander in the dark." He said, "Lament not my departure. If I continued in the world it would do no good ; those who were to be saved are saved ; those who are not saved shall be saved by the seeds of truth I have sown. The word I have preached is everlasting and imperishable. The world is fast bound in fetters and oppressed with affliction ; I now give it deliverance, a physician who brings heavenly wisdom." His favourite disciple, Ananda, here turned aside to weep.† "I am not yet perfect, and my master is passing away." Buddha called him: "O Ananda! do not weep, let not your heart be troubled. Sooner or later we must part from all we hold most dear."

Then to all his disciples: "When I have passed away, and am no longer with you in bodily presence, do not think that the Buddha has left you, and is not still in your midst. You have my words, my explanations of the deep things

\* "Phædo," 84.

† Cf. "Phædo," 59, 117.

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of truth, the laws I have laid down ; let them be your guide—Buddha has not left you. Beloved ! if you revere my memory, *love all the disciples as you love me.* Love my words. Beloved ! keep your minds on these. All other things change, my word changeth not. I will speak no more with you. I desire to depart. I desire Nirvana. These are my last words with you.” As the sun rose, the old man calmly and unconsciously passed away.\*

As at Buddha’s birth the aged Asita laid his venerable head beneath the infant’s feet, so at the funeral the “old and wrinkled” Kasyapa thrice perambulated the pyre,† and said, “May I once more behold the sacred feet, and bow my head before them.” ‡

Legends collect around the funeral, which was by cremation, after the “old rule of the wheel kings.” None could move the sacred coffin, which rose by itself into the air ; none could light the funereal pyre, which became self-enkindled. Then, in order that the relics of the sacred body might be preserved, Sakra, pouring water from the golden pitcher, extinguished the flames of the royal sandalwood pyre.§ The relics, which were like a heap of pearls, shed around sweet perfume. Afterwards came gorgeous retinues of the princes carrying golden vessels for the relics, each emulous to raise precious chaityas over the remains.

The personal influence of Buddha while he lived, the enthusiasm for humanity with which he inspired his followers, the attractive beauty of character which he bequeathed “a rich legacy” to mankind, place him as the central figure of his religion. The result has been that he has been idealised until he is regarded as divine, and omniscient, and free from all sin. “There is no deity above him ; he stands out alone, unrivalled, unequalled, and unapproachable.”|| Prayers are addressed to him, flowers and incense offered, and his relics are enshrined in stupas. Nevertheless, Gautama stands but as one in a long chain of

\* “Sutra of Buddha’s Dying Instructions,” translated in Beal’s Letter to Dr. Rost, p. 9 ; and Rhys Davids, *Encycl. Brit.*

† So at the funeral rites of Patrocles—

“Thrice in procession round the dead they drove  
Their coursers sleek.”—Il. xxiii. 13.

‡ The last act towards a corpse among the Jews is for the friends to uncover the feet, and touching the two great toes, ask pardon for offences against them, and desire to be remembered in the other world. At the entombment of Pope Pius IX., the Cardinals, in passing the body on their way to their seats in the chapel of the choir, each stopped for a moment and kissed his foot.

§ So Apollo sends a miraculous rain to preserve the body of Cræsus. Herod., i. 84.

|| “Analysis of Religious Belief,” Lord Amberley, ii. 146. ’

Buddhas who have preceded him, and who will follow. His teaching was higher and nobler than the teaching of those who came before him; the teaching of the Buddhas who will in the course of the ages follow will be greater and more divine than was his. Therefore he bade men look forward to and hail their advent.\* The next Buddha will be Maitreya, the Buddha of charity.†

It is difficult to fix the exact date of Buddha's death; it may have been as early as 477,‡ or as late as 412 B.C.§ Upon his death, Kasyapa claimed to be leader of the assembly, because Buddha had said to him, "Thou shalt wear my hempen robes." Therefore Kasyapa, fearing lest the words of Buddha should be forgotten, summoned an assembly of five hundred disciples; and the young Ananda, Buddha's beloved disciple, recited aloud the Sutras. Missionaries carried the words abroad to all lands; the religion spread over India, and King Aśoka made it the state religion of his dominions about the year 250 B.C. He promulgated decrees which remain to this day inscribed on stone pillars and cut in the living rock, enjoining morality and toleration, and justice and charity, on his subjects; commanding the foundation of hospitals; || appointing a minister of religion, who should preserve the purity of the faith and protect the aborigines and subject nations, and a minister of education, who should promote the instruction of the women in the harems and elsewhere in the principles of the religion of Buddha. The son and daughter of Aśoka introduced it into Ceylon, where it still retains its purity. Missionaries carried it into Kashmir in the first century A.D., and into Burmah in the fifth century, and thence into Siam in the seventh century. In the golden age of India, the state religion was Buddhist. We catch glimpses of its influence in the travels of the Chinese pilgrims Fa-hian in 400 A.D., of Sung-Yun in 518, and of Hiouen-Thsang in 629-648 A.D.¶ For a thousand years it maintained its supremacy. In the eighth or ninth century A.D., there seems to have been a reaction against it in favour of Brahmanism, and a persecution to have taken place, which was so thorough that there is now scarcely a Buddhist in India. In this it resembles the history of Christianity; the Aryan race from whose bosom it sprang cast it forth, and it became the religion of a race entirely different, the Turanian.

VII. Christians of all shades of opinion have spoken with

\* Cf. "Phædo," 78; Alcibiades, ii.

† Maitreya, possessed of love, (root *Maitra*, love or charity.) Fa-hian, p. 20 n. ‡ Max Müller, "Chips," i. 311.

§ Rhys David's "Ancient Coins and Measures of Ceylon."

|| *Westminster Review*, New Series, civ., p. 435.

¶ "Mémoires sur les Contrées Occidentales," par Hiouen-Thsang, en A.D. 648, St. Julien. Paris, 1857.



reverence of Buddha. The Venetian Marco Polo said, "Indeed had he been a Christian, he would have been a great saint of our Lord Jesus Christ, so good and pure was the life he led;" and he tells us how pilgrims came to Adam's Peak in Ceylon "from very long distances with great devotion, just as Christians go to the shrine of Messer Saint James in Gallicia."\* M. St. Hilaire says, "Je n'hésite pas à ajouter que, sauf le Christ tout seul, il n'est point, parmi les fondateurs de religion, de figure plus pure ni plus touchante que celle de Bouddha. Sa vie n'a point de tache. Son constant héroïsme égale sa conviction; et si la théorie qu'il préconise est fausse, les exemples personnels qu'il donne sont irréprochable. Il est le modèle achevé de toutes les vertus qu'il prêcha."† An Anglican clergyman, Mr. Baring-Gould, bears witness that "the ethic code of Buddha can hardly be ranked lower than that of Christianity; and it is immeasurably superior to every heathen system that the world has ever seen."‡

But, most remarkable of all, is the fact that Buddha is a canonised saint of the Christian Church. St. John of Damascus in the eighth century wrote a religious romance, of which the narrative is taken from the "*Lalita Vistara*," the story of Buddha's life. It became very popular in the Middle Ages, and the hero was canonised. He has his festal days in the Roman communion on 27th November, in the Eastern on 26th August, under the name of Josaphat, a corruption of Bodhisattva.§

In all times and in all places men have lived pure and holy lives, and have shown themselves Christians even "before Christ came in the flesh."|| Buddha, whose teaching approaches nearer than does that of any other founder of a religion to the teaching of Christ, has won, by the attractive beauty of his character, the unconscious homage of Christendom. He has been placed in the golden roll of Christian saints, side by side with St. Francis d'Assisi and other founders of religious orders, with St. Francis Xavier and other missionary heroes, and with Francis de Sales and other saintly men. Worthily does he stand among "the sons of God who were righteous in their lives."¶  
 "THEY WERE LOVELY AND PLEASANT IN THEIR LIVES, AND IN THEIR DEATH THEY WERE NOT DIVIDED."

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\* Yule's ed., ii. 258. "He only is a pilgrim who goeth towards or forwards the house of St. James, . . . who journey unto the holy house of Gallicia."—*Dante, Vita Nuova*.

† "Le Bouddha et sa Religion," introd. v.

‡ "Development of Christianity," i. 357.

§ Max Müller, "Chips," iv. 174-189; Beal's "Fa-hian," p. 86, n.

|| Cf. St. Aug., "Retract.," i. 13.

¶ Plato, "Apology," 41.